

TRUANCY: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Consider the common reasons students are truant:

- Fear of a bully or of being teased
- Dislike/disinterest in one or more classes
- Academic frustration and failure
- The idea that they have better things to do
- Problems at home (ranging from simple conflict to abuse and neglect)
- Peer pressure (their friends are skipping school)
- The feeling of being treated unfairly by a teacher
- Drug use
- Emotional or mental health problems
- Lack of direction/ motivation in general (unsure as to future plans)

Since truancy may occur for various reasons, it is important to understand why a particular student is not attending school. Interventions should be collaborative and include the student, family, school, community, and law enforcement, when necessary.

Recommendations for Teachers:

Accurately monitor attendance. Schools who keep accurate attendance records are better able to identify truancy problems early. This includes noting tardiness, patterns of tardiness and/or absences or absences around particular days (such as holidays) as these may be red flags that there is a problem.

Adopt, and apply, a consistent school policy regarding truancy. In order for the policy to be effective, students must be made aware of the policy, held accountable for their actions, and the policy must be followed consistently. (Meaning the consequences for truancy, such as detention, in school suspension, counseling, etc. are enforced each and every time a child is truant)

Intervene early with parents and the student when attendance becomes a problem.

When a student is absent:

- Make every effort to contact the parent and try to figure out what might be going on. If time allows, call the parent during the day instead of calling in the evening.
- Talk to the student about why he/she was absent. Make sure that the student realizes that you are aware of the absences and that you care about him/her being in school.

Acknowledge students when their attendance increases. Even when attendance is not perfect, students should be rewarded for making an effort to come to school more regularly. Doing so focuses on the positive change the student is making and encourages him/her to continue coming to school.

Make students feel welcome by getting to know their names and greeting them in the halls. Show them that you are glad to see them and are happy that they are at school.

Recommendations for Parents:

Inform your child about the importance of school and obtaining a good education. Let him/her know that school is a priority and that missing school is not okay with you.

Try to understand why your child does not want to go to school. Some children do not want to go to school because of bullies, academic difficulties, or peer pressure.

Establish a good working relationship with the school and particularly your child's teachers. By maintaining communication and collaboration between home and school it is more likely that you will be able to help your child succeed in school.

Resources:

Colorado Foundation for Families and Children. 10 Things a school can do to improve attendance. <http://www.schoolengagement.org/TruancypreventionRegistry/Admin/Resources/Resources/6.pdf> (Retrieved April 3, 2006).

Fantuzza, J., Grim, S., & Hazan, H. (2005). Project Start: A Community-based School-wide Evaluation of Intervention, *Psychology in the Schools*, 45(6).

Manual to Combat Truancy. (1996). US Department of Education.

McCluskey, C. P., Bynum, T. S., & Patchin, J. W. (2004) Reducing Chronic Absenteeism: An Assessment of an Early Truancy Initiative, *Crime & Delinquency*, 50(2), 214-234.

www.scre.ac.uk/index: The SCRE Center

<http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/dropout-prevention/viewarticle.asp?ID=99#strategies> KDE Dropout Prevention Resource

<http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk/behaviouranddiscipline/truancy/> Truancy: Parents' Center

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